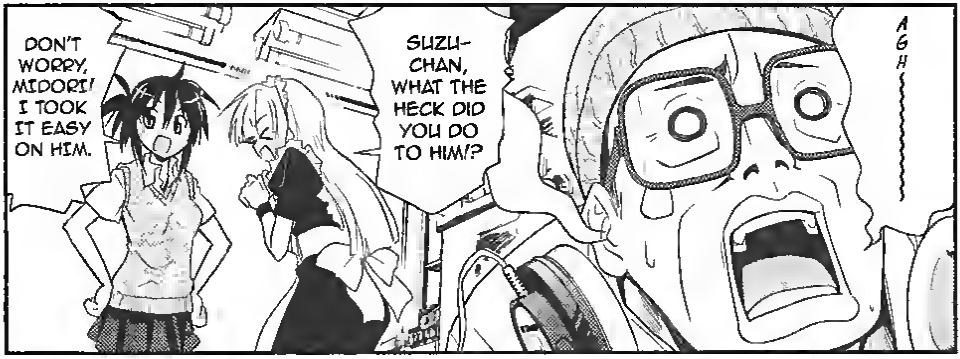
HMM...
WHATCHYA LOOKIN' AT?
OH... I'M READING A MUSIC CATALOGUE
I DON'T HAVE A CD PLAYER OR ANYTHING, SO I KIND OF WANT ONE FOR THE STORE
BUT... I DON'T HAVE THE FIRST CLUE ABOUT WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN I BUY ONE.
WELL, SEEING HOW THE CAFE IS... AS EMPTY AS EVER,
WHY DON'T WE GO AROUND AND CHECK OUT SOME STORES?
...AS EMPTY "AS EVER"?

ANYWAY, IT SURE WOULD'VE BEEN GREAT IF THERE WAS A PLACE ON OUR SHOPPING STRIP...
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT AT ALL!
FOR REAL?
AN AUDIO GUY? OF COURSE WE HAVE ONE.
IT WOULD PROBABLY BE BETTER TO SAY "WE TECHNICALLY HAVE A GUY", OR SOMETHING.
OH' UMM...
OKAY, LET'S GO RIGHT NOW!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
HOW SHOULD I PUT THIS...
HMM... OH WELL, LET'S JUST GO AND CHECK IT OUT
YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT ONCE YOU SEE HIM.

第18話 ONE SOUL FOR THE AUDIO SYSTEM
transistor teaset

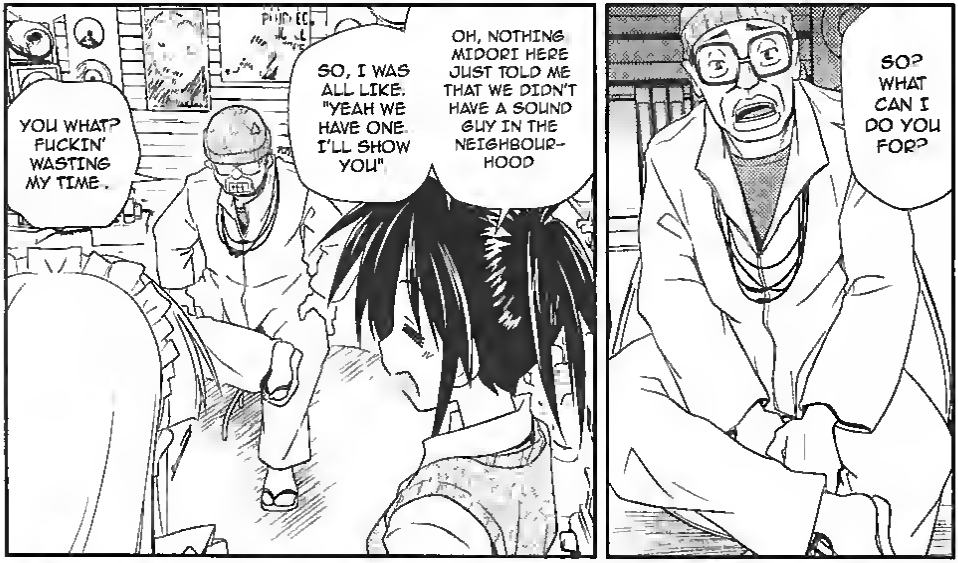
HELLO~
EXCUSE US~
NHAIII
OI!
FUHAN!
NHIIIIIII♪
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING
HEY!
HYAHAYAA
FUHHAHAN!
HAHANI

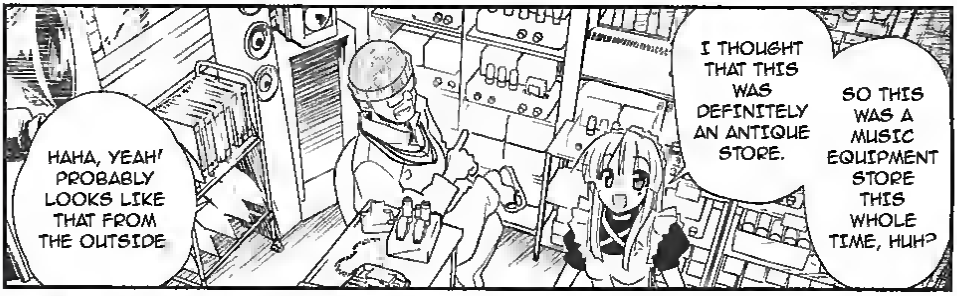


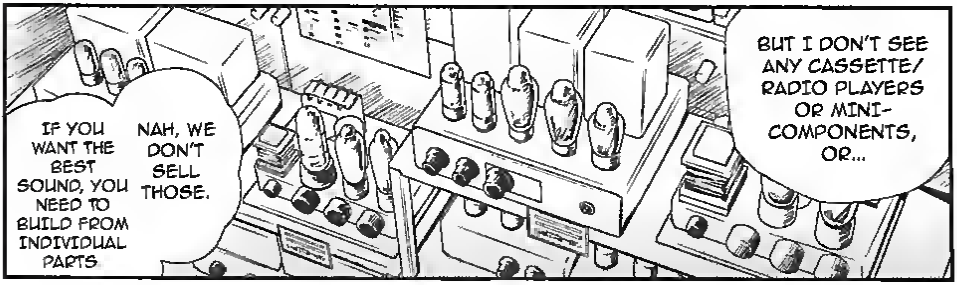
YOU'RE AT WORK RIGHT NOW, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT DO YOU DO WHENEVER A CUSTOMER DROPS BY?
"TOOK IT EASY", MY ARSE!!
WHAT ARE YOU, FUCKIN' CRAZY!?
WHY DON'T YOU TRY HAVING JOPLIN SCREAMING OFF IN YOUR EAR!

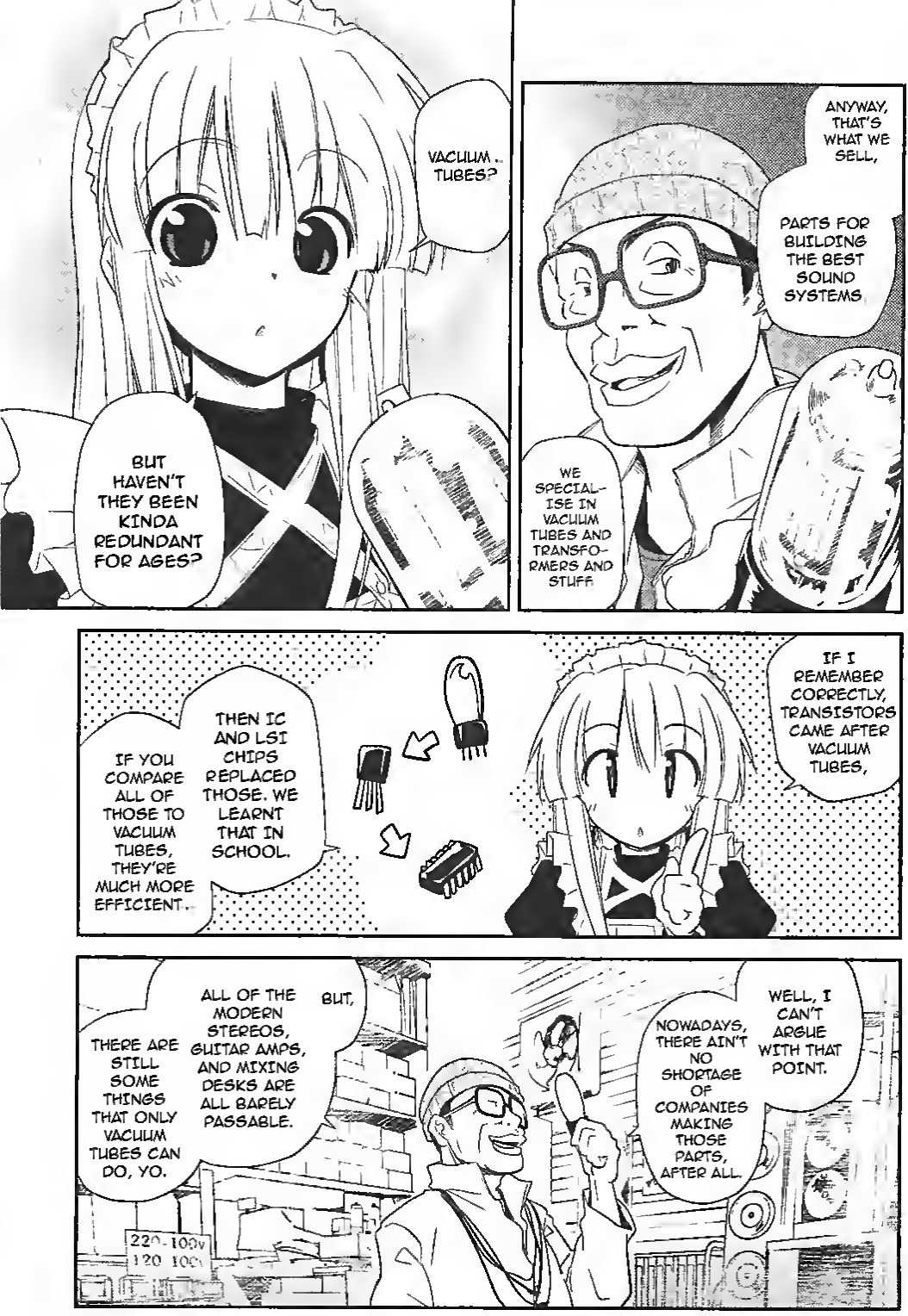
THIS IS SOMETHING THAT APPEARED IN A GAG MANGA. THERE IS A RISK OF SENDING SOMEONE DEAF BY DOING THIS, SO PLEASE DON'T IMITATE THIS AT HOME ALSO IF YOU DO THIS TO AN AUDIOPHILE, YOU'LL BE ESPECIALLY SHUNNED BY THE REST OF SOCIETY

WHO'S THIS? THAT MAID EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT?
HELLO~! IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT, MISTER?
MIDORI? THIS IS MATSUKAN-SAN OF MATSUKAN ACOUSTICS. YOU GUYS MET AT THE WELCOME PARTY, REMEMBER?


YOU WHAT? FUCKIN' WASTING MY TIME.
SO, I WAS ALL LIKE. "YEAH WE HAVE ONE. I'LL SHOW YOU"
OH, NOTHING MIDORI HERE JUST TOLD ME THAT WE DIDN'T HAVE A SOUND GUY IN THE NEIGHBOUR-HOOD
SO? WHAT CAN I DO YOU FOR?


HAHA, YEAH! PROBABLY LOOKS LIKE THAT FROM THE OUTSIDE
I THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS DEFINITELY AN ANTIQUE STORE.
SO THIS WAS A MUSIC EQUIPMENT STORE THIS WHOLE TIME, HUH?


IF YOU WANT THE BEST SOUND, YOU NEED TO BUILD FROM INDIVIDUAL PARTS
NAH, WE DON'T SELL THOSE.
BUT I DON'T SEE ANY CASSETTE/ RADIO PLAYERS OR MINI-COMPONENTS, OR...

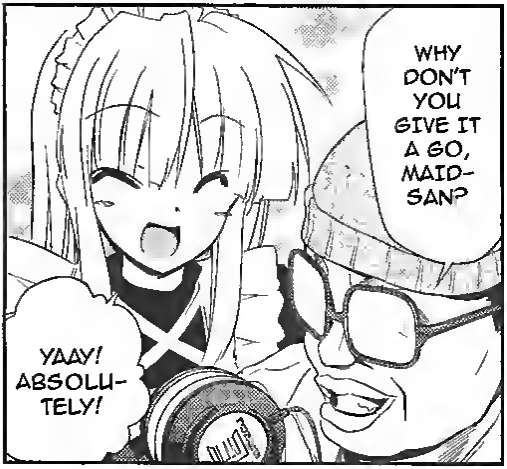

VACUUM TUBES?
BUT HAVEN'T THEY BEEN KINDA REDUNDANT FOR AGES?
ANYWAY, THAT'S WHAT WE SELL,
PARTS FOR BUILDING THE BEST SOUND SYSTEMS
WE SPECIALISE IN VACUUM TUBES AND TRANSFORMERS AND STUFF
IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, TRANSISTORS CAME AFTER VACUUM TUBES,
THEN IC AND LSI CHIPS REPLACED THOSE. WE LEARNT THAT IN SCHOOL.
IF YOU COMPARE ALL OF THOSE TO VACUUM TUBES, THEY'RE MUCH MORE EFFICIENT..
WELL, I CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT POINT.
NOWADAYS, THERE AIN'T NO SHORTAGE OF COMPANIES MAKING THOSE PARTS, AFTER ALL.
BUT, ALL OF THE MODERN STEREOS, GUITAR AMPS, AND MIXING DESKS ARE ALL BARELY PASSABLE.
THERE ARE STILL SOME THINGS THAT ONLY VACUUM TUBES CAN DO, YO.

WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES THEM SPECIAL?
REALLY!? THAT'S AMAZ-ING!!
HOW SHOULD I EXPLAIN THEIR BRILLIANCE TO HER?
WHEN I TRIED TO EXPLAIN TO MY DAUGHTER, SHE JUST TOLD ME TO FUCK OFF
OH, I'VE HOOKED HER NOW...
THIS YOUNG GIRL..
YEAH, BUT THAT'S JUST ACCORDING TO RETRO HIPSTERS. EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO THINK THAT THAT'S TRUE...
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY...?
WOW! EVEN THOUGH IT'S SO OLD, IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN TURN YOUR NOSE UP TO, HUH?
WELL...
WHEN YA COMPARE THEM TO CURRENT COMPON-ENTS, THE SOUND IS A LOT MORE FRESH.
ALSO, PEOPLE SAY THAT IT LOWERS FREQUEN-CIES THAT CAN BE HEARD BY THE HUMAN EAR

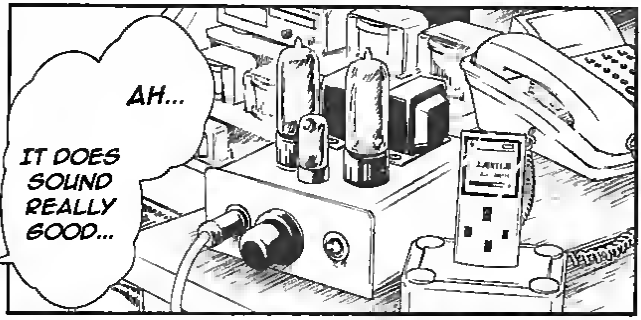
W-WELL, YOU KNOW... TRANSISTORS AND DIGITAL AMPLIFIERS ACTUALLY PERFORM A LOT BETTER, RIGHT?
SAY THAT AGAIN, I FUCKIN' DARE YOU..
IT'S A CRYING SHAME THAT IT'S NOT MY VALVE SPEAKERS, BUT, HERE! THESE ARE HOOKED UP TO A VALVE AMP THAT I BUILT WITH MY OWN HANDS!
"PER-FORM BETTER"?
FINE! PUT THESE ON AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!
YOU SEE!? CAN YOU HEAR THE DIFF-EREN-CE!?
NOT EVEN SLIG-HTLY.
AFTER
BEFORE
SURE, I'LL BITE.

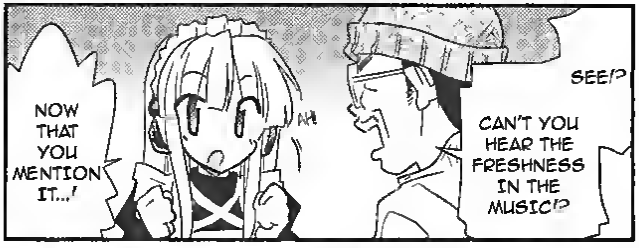
AAH... I THINK IT'S COMING TO ME NOW...
SO SORRY... I THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT HAVE JUST BEEN TURNED DOWN TOO LOW.
AAAH!

THEY'RE THAT BAD!?
SUZU-CHAN, YOU ONLY LISTEN TO MUSIC ON THAT PAIR YOU USE FOR ELECTRONIC WORK, RIGHT?
BUT STILL, I CAN'T REALLY HEAR ANY DIFFERENCE AFTER ALL.
THEY'RE PRETTY MUCH THE SAME AS THE PAIR I USUALLY USE


WHY DON'T YOU GIVE IT A GO, MAID-SAN?
YAAY! ABSOLU-TELY!

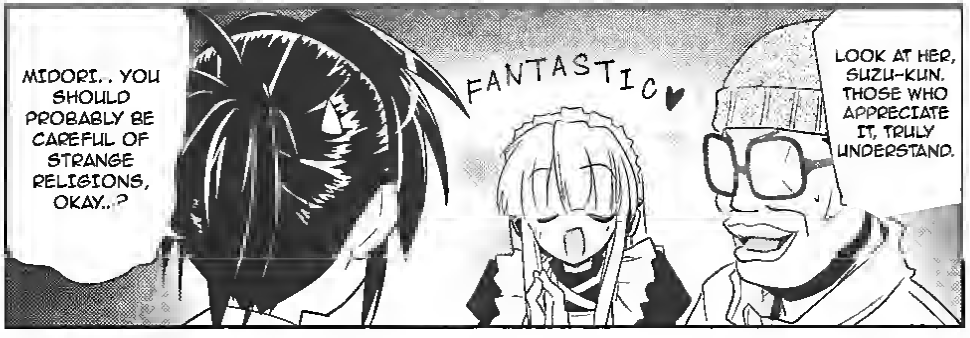
IT LOOKS LIKE ALL OF THAT CRAP IN YOUR EARS MUST HAVE FINALLY CLOGGED THEM COMPLETELY.
SUZU-CHAN... YOU'RE BEYOND HOPE... YOUR TASTE IS COMPLETELY AWEFUL...
WHAT WAS THAT? SHOW ME SOME GODDAMN RESPECT!!


AH...
IT DOES SOUND REALLY GOOD...

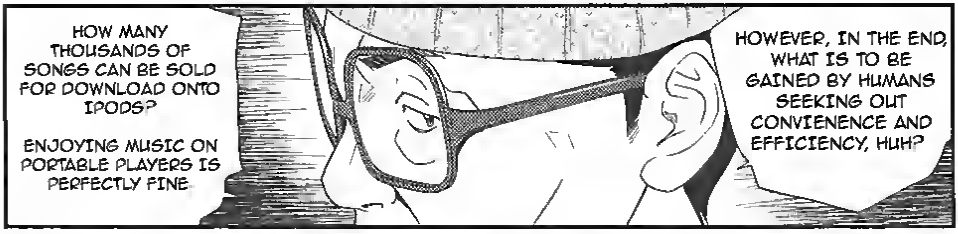

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...!
SEE!?
CAN'T YOU HEAR THE FRESHNESS IN THE MUSIC!?

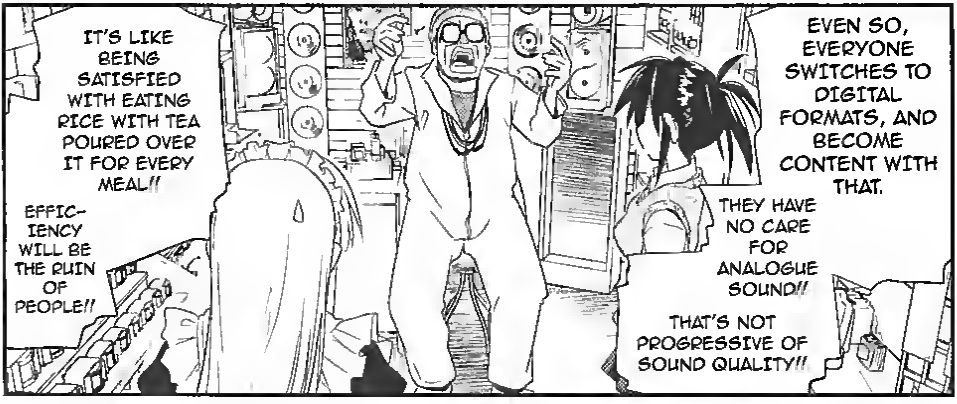
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...!
NOW THAT ALL OF THOSE CRAPPY FREQUENCIES HAVE BEEN CUT, YOU CAN REALLY SOAK UP THE MUSIC PROPERLY, RIGHT?

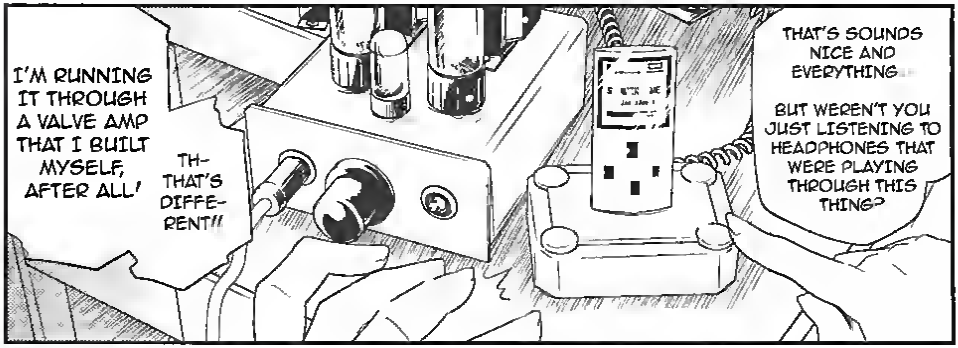
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...!
AND THEN THERE'S THAT FEELING OF PRESSURE COMING FROM DEEP WITHIN THE SOUND!

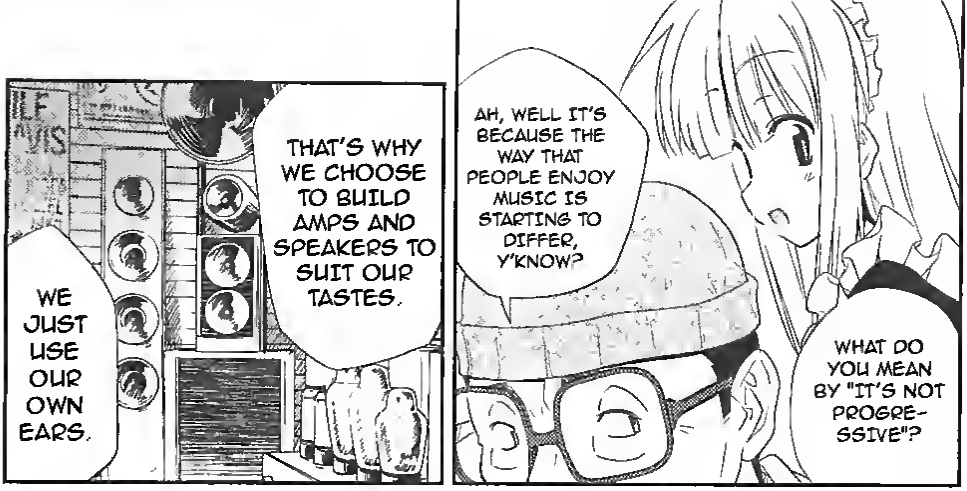

MIDORI.. YOU SHOULD PROBABLY BE CAREFUL OF STRANGE RELIGIONS, OKAY..?
FANTASTIC♥
LOOK AT HER, SUZU-KUN. THOSE WHO APPRECIATE IT, TRULY UNDERSTAND.

"INEFFIC-IENT", HUH? I GUESS THEY DO HAVE THAT REPUTATION...
THEY'RE MASSIVE, THEY EAT UP POWER, AND THEY HAVE A SHORT LIFESPAN.
BUT THEY'RE JUST INEFFI-CIENT.
WELL, EVEN I CAN UNDERS-TAND THE COOL VIBE THAT THESE VACUUM TUBES GIVE OFF
I'VE MADE RADIOS FROM VACUUM TUBES TOO, Y'KNOW


HOW MANY THOUSANDS OF SONGS CAN BE SOLD FOR DOWNLOAD ONTO IPODS?
ENJOYING MUSIC ON PORTABLE PLAYERS IS PERFECTLY FINE
HOWEVER, IN THE END, WHAT IS TO BE GAINED BY HUMANS SEEKING OUT CONVIENENCE AND EFFICIENCY, HUH?

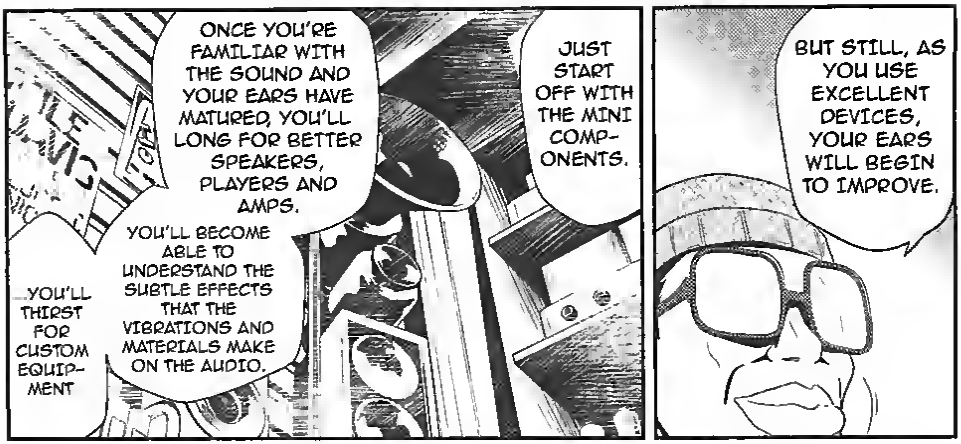

IT'S LIKE BEING SATISFIED WITH EATING RICE WITH TEA POURED OVER IT FOR EVERY MEAL!!
EFFIC-IENCY WILL BE THE RUIN OF PEOPLE!!
EVEN SO, EVERYONE SWITCHES TO DIGITAL FORMATS, AND BECOME CONTENT WITH THAT.
THEY HAVE NO CARE FOR ANALOGUE SOUND!!
THAT'S NOT PROGRESSIVE OF SOUND QUALITY!!

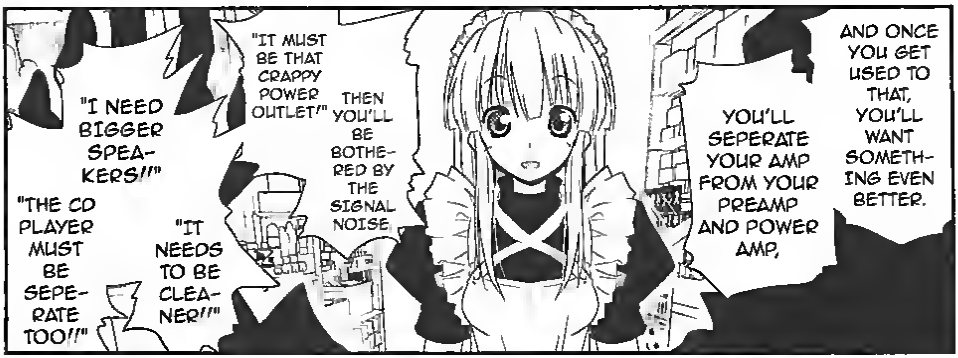

I'M RUNNING IT THROUGH A VALVE AMP THAT I BUILT MYSELF, AFTER ALL!
TH-THAT'S DIFFE-RENT!!
THAT'S SOUNDS NICE AND EVERYTHING
BUT WEREN'T YOU JUST LISTENING TO HEADPHONES THAT WERE PLAYING THROUGH THIS THING?


WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "IT'S NOT PROGRE-SSIVE"?
AH, WELL IT'S BECAUSE THE WAY THAT PEOPLE ENJOY MUSIC IS STARTING TO DIFFER, Y'KNOW?
THAT'S WHY WE CHOOSE TO BUILD AMPS AND SPEAKERS TO SUIT OUR TASTES.
WE JUST USE OUR OWN EARS.

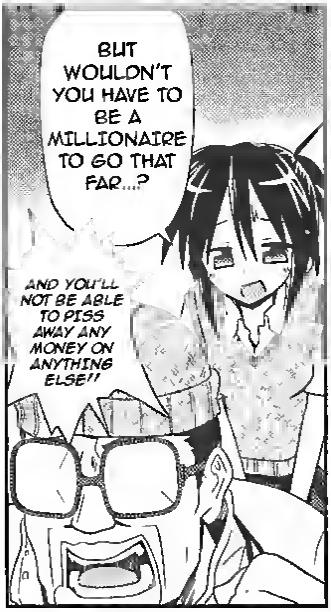
FROM THERE, MANY PEOPLE START BUILDING THEIR OWN DEVICES.
IT'S PRETTY EASY TO BUILD A VALVE AMP ATTUNED TO THE TASTE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
WELL, I GUESS SHOPS LIKE THIS EXIST TO CATER TO PEOPLE WHO WANT TO DO THAT.

THAT'S INCRE-DIBLE!
YOUR CUSTOMERS MUST HAVE REALLY GOOD EARS TO BUILD THEM, RIGHT?
HAHA, YOU COULD SAY THAT. I GUESS THAT'S WHY HANDEAF OVER HERE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO BUILD ONE.
DON'T START GIVING ME WEIRD NICKN-AMES!!


JUST START OFF WITH THE MINI COMP-ONENTS.
ONCE YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE SOUND AND YOUR EARS HAVE MATURED, YOU'LL LONG FOR BETTER SPEAKERS, PLAYERS AND AMPS.
YOU'LL BECOME ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE SUBTLE EFFECTS THAT THE VIBRATIONS AND MATERIALS MAKE ON THE AUDIO.
...YOU'LL THIRST FOR CUSTOM EQUIP-MENT
BUT STILL, AS YOU USE EXCELLENT DEVICES, YOUR EARS WILL BEGIN TO IMPROVE.


"I NEED BIGGER SPEA-KERS!!"
"IT MUST BE THAT CRAPPY POWER OUTLET!"
THEN YOU'LL BE BOTHE-RED BY THE SIGNAL NOISE.
"THE CD PLAYER MUST BE SEPE-RATE TOO!!"
"IT NEEDS TO BE CLEA-NER!!"
YOU'LL SEPERATE YOUR AMP FROM YOUR PREAMP AND POWER AMP,
AND ONCE YOU GET USED TO THAT, YOU'LL WANT SOMETH-ING EVEN BETTER.

IN THE LAST STAGE, YOU GO SO FAR AS REBUIL-DING YOUR ENTIRE HOME...
YOUR WIFE WILL RUN OUT ON YOU...
BUT STILL...
STILL...


BUT WOULDN'T YOU HAVE TO BE A MILLIONAIRE TO GO THAT FAR...?
AND YOU'LL NOT BE ABLE TO PISS AWAY ANY MONEY ON ANYTHING ELSE!!

"THE AMPS NEED TO BE EVEN MORE SEPERATED FOR IT TO SOUND DECENT!"
うお
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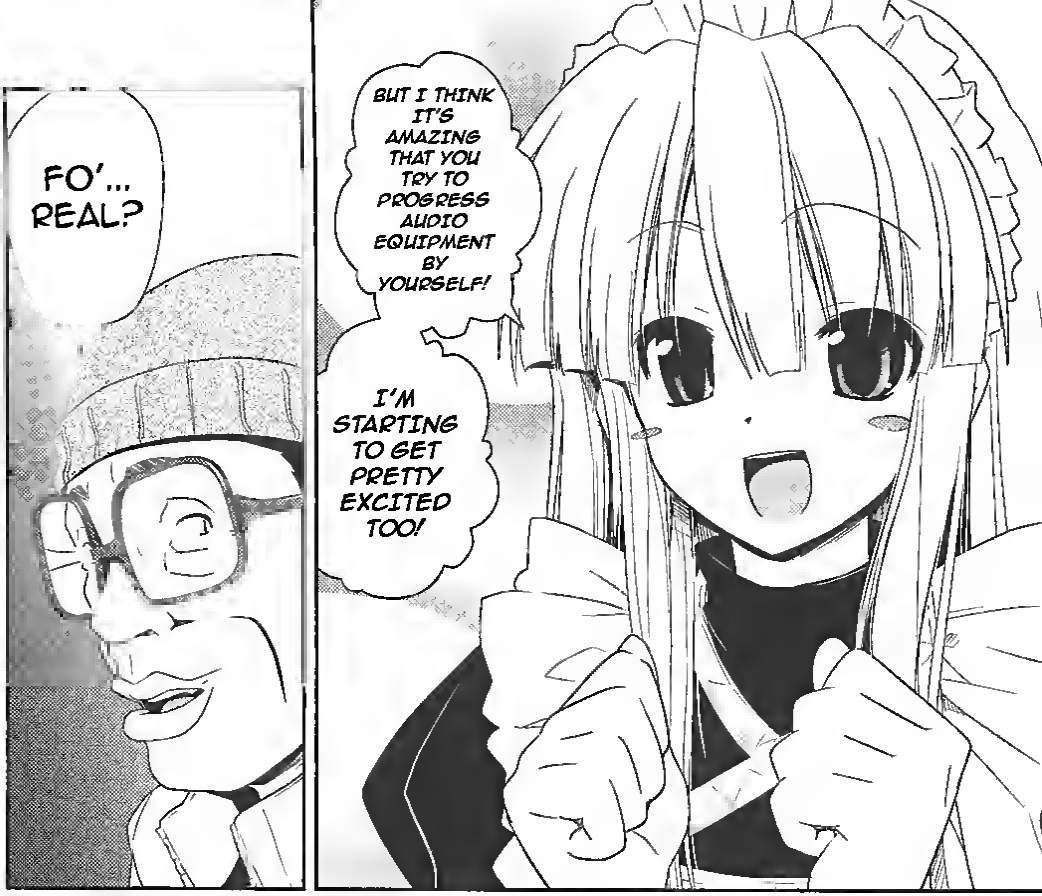
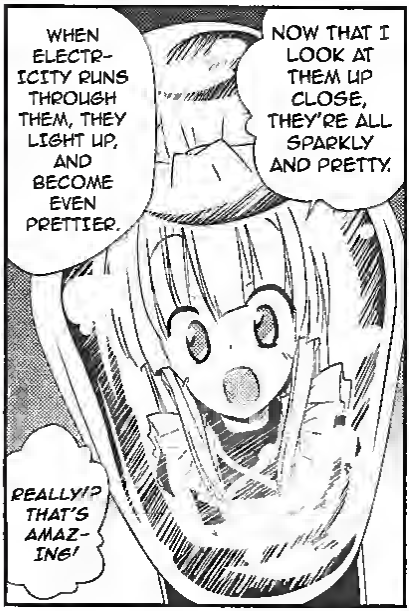
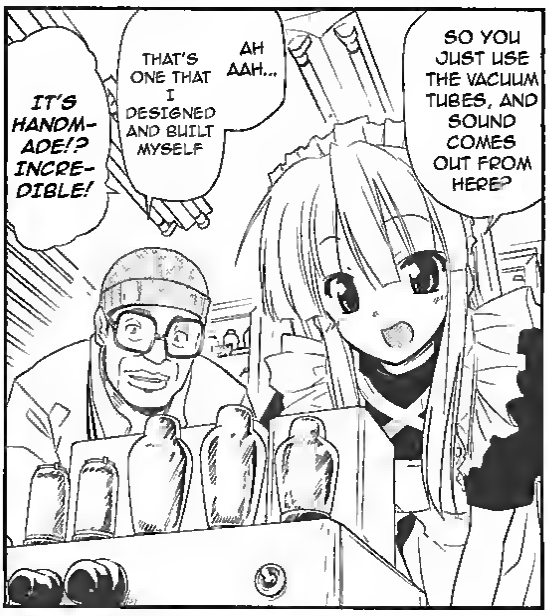
お
"NOW, LET'S CHUCK IN SOME EQS!"

AAAH... MY DAUGHTER WAS REALLY SCARY...
MY WIFE WAS REALLY SCARY...
THERE'S ALSO THE ADDICTION POTENTIAL
AND IF YOUR LIMIT IS ON HOW MUCH MONEY YOU HAVE, YOU'LL ONLY GET HALF-WAY TOWARDS QUALITY.
IF YOU'RE THAT OBSESSIVE, THEN SURE IT'S SO DEEP IT'S LIKE A BOTTOMLESS PIT
TH-THE WORLD OF MUSIC IS QUITE DEEP, HUH, SUZU-CHAN?
AAGH!! WHY WON'T YOU UNDERSTAND!?
OH, HONEY! OH, MY LITTLE GIRL!
おろろん
EVERY ONE... EVERY ONE OF THEM SAYS THAT MY BELOVED MACHINES ARE PIECES OF CRAP...
THEY ALL TELL ME TO SELL UP AND PAY THE DAMAGES
IT'S BECAUSE ALL GUYS ARE WILLING TO DIE FOR THEIR HOBBIES...
THIS IS JUST LIKE WHEN WE VISITED PAPA KAGAMI THE OTHER DAY...
WHY IS EVERYONE ON THIS STREET TOTALLY CRAZY?
...AH, HOLD UP.
DON'T JUST GO OFF INTO YOUR OWN LITTLE WORLD
HELLO AGAIN, JOPPLIN!
IT'S NOT JUNK...
IT'S NOT JUNK...


FO'... REAL?
BUT I THINK IT'S AMAZING THAT YOU TRY TO PROGRESS AUDIO EQUIPMENT BY YOURSELF!
I'M STARTING TO GET PRETTY EXCITED TOO!


WHEN ELECTR-ICITY RUNS THROUGH THEM, THEY LIGHT UP, AND BECOME EVEN PRETTIER.
NOW THAT I LOOK AT THEM UP CLOSE, THEY'RE ALL SPARKLY AND PRETTY.
REALLY!? THAT'S AMAZ-ING!


IT'S HANDM-ADE!? INCRE-DIBLE!
THAT'S ONE THAT I DESIGNED AND BUILT MYSELF
AH AAH...
SO YOU JUST USE THE VACUUM TUBES, AND SOUND COMES OUT FROM HERE?

I THINK THAT YOUR WORLD IS FANTASTIC!
WHAT!?
SEEKING OUT BEAUTIFUL MUSIC WITH THESE BEAUTIFUL MACHINES...
IT'S SO MYSTICAL THAT SOMETHING AS PRETTY AS A JEWEL CAN PLAY MUSIC, ISN'T IT?
ぽぉぉぉぉ
YOU WENT AND BOUGHT MORE SHIT!?
HANDY IF I SELL AND SELL SO I CAN REPAIR ME

I FINALLY MET THE WOMAN OF MY DREAMS...
IS THIS...
MOTHER...
WELCOME HOME, MASTER
IS THIS WHAT THEY MEAN BY "MOE MAID"!?
NO, NO, THAT'S NOT RIGHT AT ALL.
MY, MY, AH HAHA
THEN AT LEAST BE MY DAUGHTER!
MAID-SAN! WON'T YOU BECOME MY WIFE!?
I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO DECLINE.

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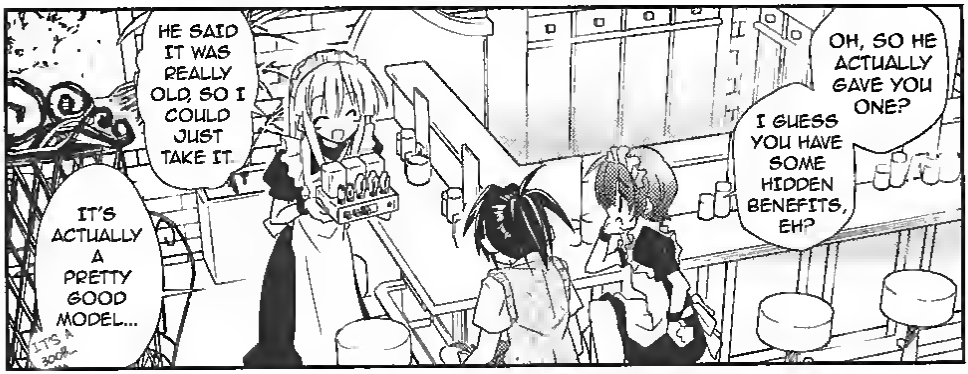
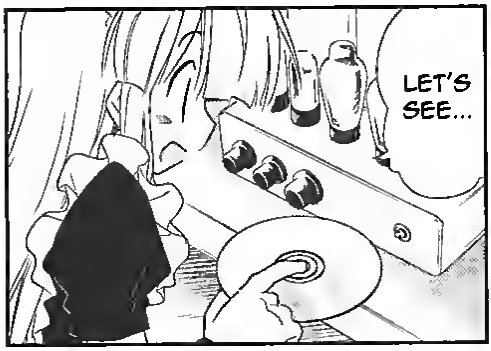
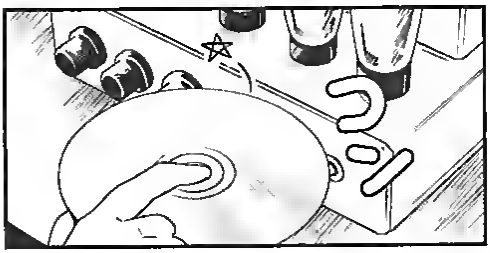

HE SAID IT WAS REALLY OLD, SO I COULD JUST TAKE IT.
IT'S ACTUALLY A PRETTY GOOD MODEL...
IT'S A BOOK
OH, SO HE ACTUALLY GAVE YOU ONE?
I GUESS YOU HAVE SOME HIDDEN BENEFITS, EH?


LET'S SEE...



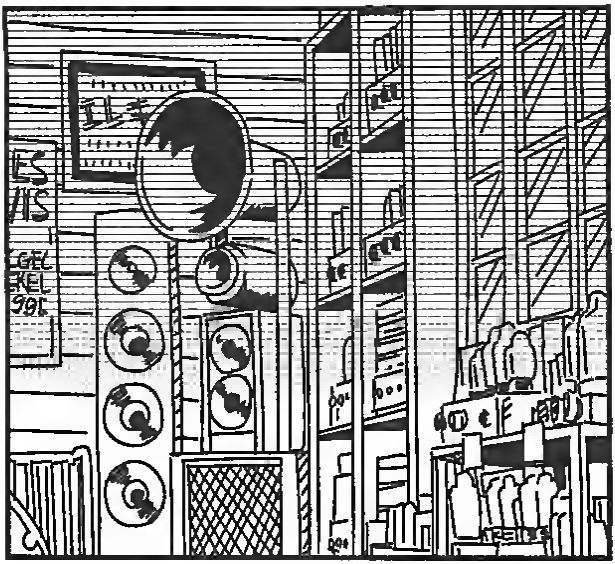
ALRIGHT! LET'S GO AHEAD AND PUT SOMETHING ON!
HUH?

?
MIDORI... IT'S AN AMP, SO...
YOU DON'T PUT CD'S IN IT.
WHAT!? THEN DOES IT TAKE TAPES OR SOMETHING!?
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN...
I HAVE NO IDEA HOW AUDIO EQUIPMENT WORKS
...THAT'S WHAT THE YOUNGSTER KNOWN AS MIDORI-SAN THOUGHT FROM THAT DAY ON
NO, EVEN IF YOU BALANCE IT THERE, IT'S NOT GONNA PLAY, MIDORI.
SPI-N

トランジスタティーセット～電気街路図～

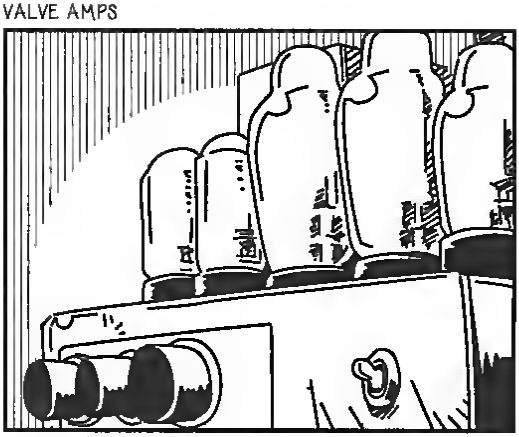
transistor teaset

AKIHABARA AUDIO STORES



BASICALLY, THERE ARE LOT OF STORES THAT STOCK HIGH GRADE-LOOKING MERCHANDISE WALKING AROUND AKIHABARA, IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE IT'S FROM A DIFFERENT TIME, BUT MAYBE THAT'S JUST ME. JUST FYI, THESE KIND OF PLACES MAKE ME FEEL REALLY AWKWARD, SO I'VE NEVER BEEN INSIDE...

VALVE AMPS



ALL OF THE THEORIES ABOUT THE PROS AND CONS OF USING VACUUM TUBES IS STILL A SUBJECT FOR DEBATE, EVEN AMONG AUDIOPHILES. WELL, I'M JUST A GUY WHO LOVES HIS 1400 YEN HEADPHONES, SO I DON'T REALLY KNOW ANYTHING THE SUBTLETIES OF AUDIO QUALITY.

HIKIKOMORI HONYAKU

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CREDITS

GUMI IS LIFE: TRANSLATION, REDRAWS, TYPESETTING, QUALITY CHECKING.

TAXUEZHENREN (NYAA.SE): RAWS

AFTERWARD

HEY GAIS, GUMI HERE!

SO, THIS CHAPTER WAS KIND OF IGNORANT IN IT'S PORTRAYAL OF A FAT-LIPPED, SMILE-LINED MAN SPEAKING IN A ROUGH 'N' TOUGH FORM OF JAPANESE. THIS SORT OF PORTRAYAL DOESN'T NORMALLY REGISTER AS RACIST IN JAPAN, BUT I'M NOT TOUCHING THE SUBJECT OF JAPANESE RACIAL SENSITIVITY WITH A 20 FOOT POLE, BOTH BECAUSE IT WOULD TAKE TOO LONG AND THAT THIS CREDIT PAGE ISN'T THE FORUM FOR THAT SORT OF DISCUSSION.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING, I DIDN'T LIKE THIS CHAPTER, AS THE HUMOUR OF THE ORIGINAL VERSION GAVE ME LESS TO WORK WITH THAN OTHER CHAPTERS, AND WAS BASICALLY THE SAME PUNCHLINE AS THE LAST CHAPTER, BUT MORE POORLY EXECUTED.

ANYWAY, CYA NEXT CHAPTER,

GUMIISLIFE